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# Makers Of History







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of History

# *The Tale of the Colt*

To the broad lands of Texas, to Nome in the North,  
And as far as you like, heading West,  
Whenever the call to adventure went forth,  
The pioneers carried the best;  
From the old cap-and-ball to the big forty-five,  
That packed a most wonderful jolt,  
The gun that they banked on to keep 'em alive,  
Was—no matter what model—the Colt.

The long-barelled rifle was good for the meat,  
And the Sharps' a most excellent gun,  
But when, at close quarters 'twas hell and repeat,  
The Colt's was ahead, six to one;  
And though killers went heeled with a brace of the same  
When the West was some wooly and raw,  
They found that they bucked an unbeatable game,  
For the Colt, in the end, was the Law.

If Carson and Bridger, Bill Cody, Wild Bill,  
Are riding somewhere in the stars,  
It's a cinch that you'll find 'em just over the hill,  
Patrolling and scouting on Mars;  
They may be attired in their buckskin and boots,  
Or capotes and fur, if it's cold,  
But I'm willing to wager, whatever their suits,  
They are packing their Colt's as of old.

The trail of the puncher grows dim with the years,  
And the branding iron reddens with rust,  
Yet out of the past his bright motto appears;  
"The Colt is the gun that we trust."  
He started a ruckus as often as not,  
And it's doughnuts to bullets he felt,  
All undressed, plumb afoot, and ashamed of his lot,  
If he hadn't a Colt in his belt.

It's been jolted from holsters and trod in the sand,  
Or it's lain for a season in snow,  
It's been rusted and busted all over the land,  
But it's never unwilling to go;  
From the pump-handle charge to the present-day gat,  
With its magazine, safety and bolt,  
It's a thoroughbred gun, and a standard at that,  
And so much for The Tale of The Colt.

Henry Herbert Knibbs



# MAKERS OF HISTORY

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*A Story of the Development  
of the History of Our Country  
and the Part Played in it by  
the COLT    ∞    ∞    ∞*

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# MAKERS OF HISTORY

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## Chapter I

### WRESTING THE WILDERNESS FROM THE GRIP OF SAVAGERY

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*Man is forever following the sun across the sky. Columbus came seeking the West Indies. Cortez and Pizarro came westward for silver, gold and dominions. Whether for greed or need, where the sun sets man settles* ~ ~

In a new country, man's profits are largest on what Nature provides. Furs were beyond the clearings that extended to St. Louis and Westport (Kansas City). The clearings supplied corn, potatoes, wheat, food. But the forests—the dark, silent reaches in which lurked the painted, merciless savage—meant furs, profits, riches.

Farther and farther into the wilderness penetrated the search for pelts and skins. In 1811, John Jacob Astor flung a double expedition against the dangers of a wild, almost unknown land to which only Lewis and Clark had penetrated before. One





was half exterminated by Indians while trading with them on shipboard in the Columbia River. The other, after unreckonable overland sufferings, joined the remainder of the expedition that had gone by sea, at their northern settlement, Astoria, which survived as a fur trading post, in Oregon territory.

In 1842, Lieutenant John C. Fremont, with twenty-one men, went over the Oregon Trail and surveyed a practical route to the Pacific Coast. Kit Carson, a hunter, trapper, scout and frontiersman acted as guide. Fremont, in 1847, made a third expedition which took part in the acquisition of California. Carson was among the sixty "well-equipped marksmen to whom prizes were offered for every increase of skill."

Fremont's men, at least once in their adventures, owed their preservation to the foresight which had included in their equipment the new revolving pistol of Samuel Colt.

The tense moment dependent upon the Colt is recounted in the journal of S. N. Carvalho of Fremont's fifth transcontinental expedition in 1853. Fifty or sixty mounted Eutaw Indian warriors with rifles and bows and arrows galloped and tore into the Fremont camp. They demanded payment of a great deal of red cloth and blankets, knives and powder at the threat of massacre. Colonel Fremont







laughed at them. He calmly tore a leaf from his journal and requested Carvalho to place it against a tree at a distance near enough to hit it every time. He said "Discharge your Colt's navy six-shooter—fire at intervals of ten to fifteen seconds—and call the attention of the Indians to the fact that it is not necessary for white men to load their arms." Mr. Carvalho tells it this way: "After the first shot they pointed to their own rifles, as much as to say that they could do the same.

"I, without lowering my arm, fired a second shot; this startled them. I discharged it a third time; their curiosity and amazement was increased; the fourth time I placed the pistol in the hands of the chief and told him to discharge it, which he did, hitting the paper and making another impression of the bullet.

"The fifth and sixth times two other Indians exploded it. This scared them into the acknowledgment that they were all at our mercy, for we could kill them as fast as we liked, if we were so disposed. They forgot their demands."

The Mormons had started their long, valiant journey from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake, Utah; almost two thousand miles of parched prairie, swollen rivers; hostile redskins adding to the innumerable perils. Emigrants were treading the Oregon Trail. The cr-rack of the Colt had become a part of





the voice of progress westward. It stood between ruthless red riders and helpless women with tender babes; women staunch in the face of famine, fever, fatigue, followers of men who hungered not for furs, now, but for homes.

James Bridger with Colt and plainsman's cunning entered the van of trail makers for the westward Argonauts. Settlements commenced to dot the prairies. But one day there came an interruption to homesteading.

Far off in California a man had founded a little kingdom of his own. On the present site of Sacramento was the fortress from which this man administered the affairs of his domain which he called New Helvetia. Whether our Western coast would have been an empire ruled by John A. Sutter or not can never be said. A little yellow glint from a rock beneath the water of a mill race forty miles from Sutter's fort, destroyed his dynasty. It was gold, discovered by J. W. Marshall, General Sutter's associate. From St. Louis, Ft. Leavenworth, Ft. Laramie and Santa Fe, streamed the wagon trains. While the hammer of blacksmith and wheelwright clanged in the cities that belched forth their gold hunters, the Colt cracked night and day along the trails terrorized by the fiendish war-cry of the painted savage.

The weary, hungry, sick and wounded camped







about the forts along the way. At these points they re-conditioned their equipments, replenished their ammunition and supplies to struggle on. From these forts went forth the hunters, armed with rifle and Colt, to supply with buffalo and deer meat the soldiers and the arriving and departing adventurers who made up the wagon-dotted groups under the shelter of the guns. In the old Governor's Palace at Santa Fe, New Mexico, is a case with one of the two beautiful Colt's revolvers which belonged to Ceran St. Vrain, a partner of the Bent Brothers, in the days when Kit Carson hunted for Bent's fort. Wild Bill Hickok, Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill, and Buffalo Jones, all dead shots with a Colt, were hunters for army posts.

Once distant from protecting aid of fast-moving troops, the on-pressing hordes put their trust in the Colt. One traveler, Frederick Law Olmstead, in "A Journey Through Texas," wrote at this time "of the Colt's we cannot speak in too high terms. Though subjected for six or eight months to rough use, exposed to damp grass, and to all the ordinary neglects and accidents of camp travel, not once did a ball fail to answer the finger . . . There are probably in Texas about as many revolvers as male adults, and I doubt if there are a hundred in the state of any other make . . . a border weapon, so reliable in





every sense, would give brute courage to even a dyspeptic tailor."

In the wake of caravans followed freighting by mule and ox teams. The law of the Colt became the law of the frontier—and a good law it was. The lawful man was not prey to the unlawful man, but had protection strapped to his hip or under his armpit.

In a history of the gold rush to California, Frank Marryat wrote that "in Sonora, every man carried arms, generally a Colt's revolver, with no attempt at concealment . . . the fear of the law, in the best regulated community, is not so strong as the fear of sudden death; and if quarrels and assassinations were rare, comparatively, in the mountains, it was owing to the fact that every man was able to protect himself."

The one thing on which pioneer, miner, adventurer for gold, peltry or other trading opportunities depended for courage of purpose and high hope—that is, communication with friends and loved ones left behind—created the Pony Express. When the riders of the Pony Express discarded rifles as adding too much weight to their equipment, the Colt remained as their only arm. Some of them carried an extra loaded cylinder for quick re-loading when under fire. Describing the first mail stage to make the monthly trip twixt Independence, Mo., and Santa







Fe, New Mexico, The Missouri Commonwealth, in July, 1850, announced “. . . The mail is guarded by eight men . . . each man has at his side, fastened to the stage, one of Colt’s revolving rifles; in a holster below, one of Colt’s long revolvers, and in his belt a small Colt revolver . . . so that these eight men are ready, in case of attack, to discharge one hundred thirty-six shots without having to re-load . . . we have no fears for the safety of the mails.”

Natural stopping places for re-provisioning, changes of horses for the Pony Express and the stage coach, and points of rest for the traveler created communities. Some knots of buildings began as mining camps and developed to be towns. The East had what they needed, they had what the East needed, so railroads crept forward, through the wilderness, over the plains, across the deserts, spanning mountains. Every foot of the way was contested by Cheyennes and Sioux. The Colt was as much in the hand of the track-builder as crow-bar and sledge. But the Union Pacific joined with the Central Pacific and the Santa Fe crept across Kansas and down through the Colt-conquered fastnesses. The frontier moved forward, step by step, at the muzzle of a Colt in the hand which made the desert bloom and the benefits of civilization reach the furthestmost corners of the mighty West



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# THE COLT, *the* CAT- TLEMAN AND *the* COWBOY ~ ~

## Chapter II

*Dull Knife's* raiding redskins were in the immediate vicinity of the Driscoll Brothers ranch in the Cherokee Strip. Anderson Helton rode north and a companion set out to the west to get in their horses. Helton soon saw a dozen horses being rapidly driven by a mounted man toward ranch headquarters from the direction his companion had taken. The horses and their driver disappeared in a deep ravine and Helton rode diagonally toward the point at which they would come out. A few rods from the ravine his horse snorted, there was a volley of shots, and as he swung about, a dozen Cheyennes yelled their war-cry. They had seen the two cowboys depart and, by skillfully swinging over on the sides of their horses, made it appear that Helton's comrade was driving in the riderless mounts.

As Helton drew his Colt's .44, one Indian considerably in the lead caught the movement and flung himself to the opposite side of his racing cayuse. Helton's action was the quicker. His bullet crashed through the Indian's back, killing him instantly. A chance shot from the Cheyennes caught





Helton's horse badly in the hip. He raced for the head of the ravine, abandoned his mount and scrambled into a deep pocket in an escarpment overhanging the gulch. Dull Knife's braves found their own exposure too great a risk and, after several stratagems, left the cowpuncher in his security. This story reveals a side of the cowboy's life that made him and the Colt inseparable comrades.

The Basques had come from Grenada with their sheep herds. Grazing eastward, they protected their flocks from coyote and wolf with the Colt. Often they protected themselves from the cattlemen as well, for they were making inroads on the territory of the cattle barons.

In the southwest, John Chisum, E. G. Murphy and other cattle barons held their lordly sway over lands that reached from sunrise to sunset and beyond. Their rule was absolute. Soon they also had other things than wolves and mountain lions from which to protect their longhorns. The Colt now came to their aid in bringing fear to the grim soul of the cattle rustler, the brand blotcher. The men who worked for the rancheros were a sturdy, straight-forward, untalkative, big-hearted product of their environment. They worked hard and they played hard, they rode hard, often drank hard, fought hard, and died hard.







At this time men's wrath fired swiftly and hands leaped to guns like lightning but the results were not always tragedy. In Roger Pocock's "A Frontiersman's Autobiography" we find this incident: "I asked him pointedly for his apology. He had an axe. For a long moment I watched his slow eye travel around from chamber to chamber of the empty cylinder of my Colt, then glitter as his glance bored up towards mine along the sights, with perfect understanding. Then, dropping his axe, he let me off with two black eyes and a bloody nose, a generous 'satisfaction' which confirmed my distaste for the odious practise of duelling."

One cowboy with a furrowed scar across his temple, said to James B. Hendryx, as he pointed a small thoughtful finger to it, "Old Man Colt made all men equal an' a dam' sight more'n equal, when it comes to that, 'cause the big hombre's got to shoot straightest, an' most generally always it takes him longest to get a-goin'. Where'n hell would I be now, if I'd grow'd up big as Shonkin Jack, which his head's half agin' wider'n what mine is? That slug would of ketched me plumb in the eye, an' I'd be planted acrost the white fence."

Philip Ashton Rollins has found enough to The Cowboy to write a book of that name about him. As he explains, the Colt, like the lariat, was part of the





puncher's working equipment. At first, Indian infested country or nearness to the Mexican border where trouble brewed, were reasons for the cowboy's Colt proclivities. But there were ones more technically related to his trade. As Rollins says "stock hopelessly injured or diseased, temperamentally prone to assail man and beast, or so debased that, for breeding reasons, its elimination was urgent" made the Colt indispensable. A steer, eating locoweed, would often go amuck. The Colt had to be there to stop him; often to turn a stampede, or to shoot a horse with leg broken in a badger hole.

These are the reasons which the analyst finds prompted the cowboy to carry a Colt. But when Francis Lynde put it up to the cowboy during the rush to the Leadville, Colorado, mines, he was told they carried the Colt because "the 'grip' and 'balance' of the weapon might have many imitators but no equals; that, unlike most other hand guns it doesn't 'jump' and shoot high."

Pat Garrett, whose Colt killed Billy the Kid, rode herd for Pete Maxwell when he first came into the cow country.

Frank B. Coe approached a rancher near Ft. Lion on the Arkansas River in the early days for a job. "Will you fight if we are attacked by the Indians?" he was asked. "Yes." "Can you shoot?"







“Yes.” “Will you take your turn on guard?” “Yes.” “You will not get scared and leave me?” “No.” “I’ll arm you up right, then,” said the rancher. Coe became the possessor of a rifle and a .45 Colt. With that Colt he later shot a bear which his rifle had failed to stop. The Colt bullet got the bear square in the forehead. It was a grizzly that weighed over a thousand pounds. Its pain-maddened charge was stopped within eight feet of the marksman.

James H. Cook, rancher, in “Fifty Years on The Old Frontier,” tells of an exciting incident in which, with a .45 Colt, he faced a wounded buffalo. The ball did not quite sever the beast’s spine. It lunged furiously completing the break, and fell dead, but Cook thought his end was at hand, having tripped himself and fallen in an effort to avoid the plunging four-footed mountain.

Of course, when Judge Colt was the law, some men mis-used it when they took the law “in their hand.” Walter J. Coburn, himself a cowpuncher before he saddled a pen, remembers Harvey Logan, the tall, dark-featured rancher whose Colt .45 spoke once and barred him by that speech from the company of lawful men. Logan rode ten miles of a Christmas Eve to Landusky, Montana. He left Pike Landusky, the man whose friends were in



power at the county seat, a huddled, silent form on the floor at Rafter T Ranch. Pike Landusky's own friends later admitted he was the aggressor but Harvey Logan crossed into Montana, to an outlaw destiny as Kid Curry, becoming a member of the Butch Cassidy gang.

Of the moments when his Colt most frequently stood him in good stead, none surpassed those of the lonely vigil of the cowboy when trail herding. R. T. Greer, credited with being the oldest and greatest of the trail drivers, saved his life with the Colt many times. On one occasion, traveling West on the line between the Pottawatomie and the Seminole nations, his wagon was halted by several members of a gang, outside of a saloon and gambling headquarters known as the First-and-Last-Chance. Three were at his horses' heads and one rode up but, as he did so, the muzzle of Greer's Colt looked him in the face while his wagon companion covered the others with a shotgun. The leader drew the gang off and the trail driver learned a few days later that less than twenty-four hours before his experience with them, they had killed three men on the same spot, under the same circumstances. Mr. Greer, another time on a trail drive alone, saved his scalp from five Cheyennes. As he puts it, "I had five cartridges in my Colt. When the good work was over, I still had







one shot left." His favorite reminiscence is of being seated on the balcony of the old "Dodge House" with a traveling salesman. Dave Mathewson had just been showing Greer his Colts. One of them had eighteen notches on the grip; each notch "Mysterious Dave" confessed to represent a human life. Mathewson had left the balcony and was in a saloon next door when shots rang out. The salesman, despite Greer's warning, went to see the excitement. There were more shots. The killer, Mathewson, rushed out, sprang on a horse, and shouted to Greer that he had had to shoot down a man, and was off. A moment later the salesman came limping up the stairs to the balcony again. Greer doubled up in mirth, for the drummer couldn't sit down. A ricocheting bullet had caught him in the seat of his trousers. He waited just long enough for Greer to help bandage his thigh and for the next stage away. Dodge City was too warm a place for him.

Pawnee Bill, who still lives on his ranch in Pawnee, Oklahoma, carried a Colt when he worked as a cowboy on the Zimmerman Ranch on Skeleton Creek. At Medicine Lodge later, while in town from one of his expeditions guiding settlers across the plains, he got his two Colts into action just as some bank bandits were escaping with a haul in getting which they had killed two bank officers. Others





joined Pawnee Bill and they killed, wounded and captured the entire band. Fighting with the friendly Pawnees against the Sioux, who did so much to retard the progress of railroads West, gave Pawnee Bill his name.

Will James, ranch-rider and writer, likes to tell of when his saddle cinch broke and, in the tumble to earth, his Colt became buried in the soft sod. It was a year later, and a hard winter had passed, when he found the Colt, its hard rubber handle warped and cracked so it fell off. He soaked the remains at camp in a can full of coal-oil, rubbed on it the next day, sent for new handles, set a tin-can up on a rock fifty yards away, and, as he puts it, "the old pocket cannon boomed, the can disappeared and, when it was picked up, you couldn't of told whether it'd held string beans or corn."

To give the cowboy his due, it must be admitted that he used more ammunition shooting into the air in his exuberant spirits with three months' pay in his pocket than in taking life with lead. There were days when gold could always tip the scales of justice but, as Wilder Anthony has one of his characters say in his book "Hidden Gold" . . . "In my experience, I aint never seen but one judge that couldn't be bought; money an' influence don't count a hoop with him. It's Judge Colt, gents!"





# HE COLT *and* *the* SCOUT ~

## Chapter III

“*There was a bullet flash and Ranger dropped dead under the young hunter. The air was rent with wild yells as six Indian warriors on hardy ponies galloped toward him.*” Texas Jack Omohundro, famous scout, plainsman and Indian fighter, companion of Buffalo Bill, had ridden out from the old River Fort to hunt alone. As Erle Wilson tells it, sheltered “behind his dead horse, Jack raised his Colt and fired, dropping an Indian. Crack! went his pistol again, picking off a mustang. A third shot brought down another Indian. The redskins were not accustomed to a repeating gun and were amazed, thinking it some new magic of the pale-faces. Quickly they turned their horses and rode to a short distance. As they did so, a pony of one of the Indians dashed up to Jack. The boy dexterously caught the mustang, and transferring the saddle and bridle from his lifeless horse to his newly acquired one, mounted. So, thanks to his Colt, Texas Jack made his escape” and became one of the picturesque figures in the annals of the pioneer West.

Such men as Texas Jack, Al Seibers and Jack





Mellish guided the traveler across the country when the way was obscure and the Indian always waiting in ambush. Hearing of the Indian attacks and their way of coaxing the single charge from the white man's rifle by feints and ruses, then, before the pioneer could re-load, charging their ponies down upon him and massacreing the traveler, Samuel Colt pushed to completion his invention of the revolving chamber for a pistol such as served Texas Jack. The Colt came to those who faced the perils of the westward march like new courage to the heart. Josiah Gregg, in his "Journal of a Santa Fe Trader," wrote in 1839 "My brother and myself were each provided with one of Colt's repeating rifles, and a pair of pistols of the same, so that we could . . . carry thirty-six ready loaded shots apiece." How well this stood him in stead, he tells further on, relating an encounter with Indians. ". . . he had at the same time drawn one of Colt's repeating pistols . . . when, finding that it excited the curiosity of the Comanche chief, he fired a few shots in quick succession . . . . The chief seemed to comprehend the secret instantly, and . . . discharged a number of arrows with the same rapidity . . ." That the trader was not molested he credits with "Thanks to Mr. Colt's invention."

Traders, settlers, miners and small bands, fe-







vered with visions of the Western El Dorado, were always eager to have the service of a scout like Texas Jack, Bill Cody, Pawnee Bill, Kit Carson, Will Comstock, Billy Dixon and Amos Chapman—men who not only knew the country but whose Colts never missed. Hugh Pendexter tells me that California Joe, greatest of the early scouts, who gave the Sierra Nevada to Custer as his post-office address, carried a Colt. The exploits of men like these with the Colt are among the most thrilling human documents in American literature . . .

“Injuns! Take these reins!” Courtney Ryley Cooper tells the story of Buffalo Bill’s greatest adventure with a Colt, as Mrs. Cody related it to him. It was when Buffalo Bill was serving as buffalo killer during the building of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. They had ridden too far from town. It was a terribly close chance. The careening buggy raced towards Salina with the Indians galloping their ponies to cut them off. In Cody’s hand was his Colt. In his face, something hard and death-like. The muzzle pointed to his own wife’s head. “They’ve got rifles,” he said shortly. “They can outdistance me. I want to be ready—so that if they get me I can pull the trigger before I fall. It is better for a woman to be dead, Lou—than to be in their hands.” On and on the buggy rolled and





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rocked while Cody muttered to himself as he measured quarter mile, half mile, then suddenly raised the Colt and fired straight in the air and shouted "Hurry, Lou! A little more and we're safe!" He had sighted the forms of men urging their horses forward from camp. They passed with a clattering rush and Buffalo Bill lifted the reins from his wife's nerveless hands as she fainted in his arms.

George F. Worts tells of his grandfather coming up with Buffalo Bill in camp on the trail. Cody greeted him gruffly; in those days mutual strangers were naturally suspicious. Hurt by the scout's cold reception his admirer started to prepare his supper when he sighted a rattlesnake slowly crawling toward the figure of the buffalo hunter squatting over a cook-fire. "I whipped out my Colt"—as Worts says—"I am sure I heard him use that phrase fifty times. Of course he got the snake—probably frightened the buffalo hunter out of his wits for the moment. But that Colt began a friendship which lasted to supply me with the seeds for the dozens of adventure stories I have written."

Cody demonstrated his own dexterity with the Colt as late as 1881 in a contest at the Fair Grounds in St. Louis. Captain D. L. Payne, the scout, as Edwin L. Sabin relates it, was walking in with a chipped glass ball for inspection, when at thirty





yards Buffalo Bill stopped him and, while a man steadied Payne's head with his hands on either side of it, Cody's Colt cracked and the bullet struck under Payne's mustache—cut off the cigar within less than a quarter of an inch from his lips.

When Louis C. Mullikin, with forty men, in 1888–89 was doing some engineering work in the Texas Panhandle for the Santa Fe Railroad, Jack Mellish was his line-wagon driver. Mellish was one of the marvels with a Colt—on the shoot and on the draw. He would frequently get the tethered mules on the run, then before their lines could jerk them up, he would shoot out the line stakes for devilment with his Colt .45. The one and one-half inch square stakes would hop out of the ground and spin away after each other without a miss. On a running horse, Mellish would throw two pieces of wood in the air, draw, fire and hit both with one bullet. Mr. Mullikin has seen him place his hands on his head, have another man toss up a can, draw, hit it with both right and left gun and holster his Colts before the can reached the apex of its rise.

While marvelous deeds were done with the Colt by these scouts, they often set traps for the credulity of the tenderfoot who taxed them for tales. So, as Zane Grey relates it in "The Last of the Plainsmen," Buffalo Jones tells how a hunter drew his







Colt and shot a centipede off the plainsman's arm "as clean as a whistle. But the bullet hit a steer in the leg; and would you believe it, the bullet carried so much poison that in less than two hours the steer died of blood poison."

The Indians, though never good revolver shots, were not long in coveting the Colt. Sitting Bull, the noted Sioux chief, carried a .36 Colt. Geronimo, Red Cloud, and Iron Bull also carried Colts.

A beautiful, pearl-handled and silver-mounted Colt carried by Billy Comstock, the blue-eyed, boyish plains scout who served Custer in Kansas, 1867-68, attracted the eye of some Cheyenne braves. Comstock refused all their offers for it but, in leaving a "friendly" Cheyenne village in August, 1868, was shot from behind by his escort of young warriors—not for his scalp but for this very gun.

The scouts and their Colts were indispensable to the emigrant but no less to the soldiery. It was the born Indian tracker who not only guided the frontier cavalry to the lair of the savage but saved them from the wily traps with which the cunning Indian brain pitfalled the plains. The Cheyennes, under Roman Nose, in a single month, killed or captured eighty-four Kansas settlers. They grew so bold they attacked the builders of the Kansas Pacific Railroad and their movements were so rapid





that, but for the fifty scouts collected by Major Forsyth, of Sheridan's staff, the military could not have trailed them. In each scout's equipment was a heavy Colt's revolver.

Colonel John Parker, chief scout for General Howard, showed H. Bedford-Jones a furrow in the stock of his old Colt where a Nez Percé bullet was persuaded not to enter his groin. It started H. Bedford-Jones' imagination. He target-practised with a Colt on a big Michigan Oak with a prominent knot. The first shot hit the knot and came back and hit him, and right there Bedford-Jones abandoned marksmanship and resumed authorship.

To heroic Lone Star, General Phil Sheridan wrote this tribute: "For faithfulness, daring, endurance and good judgment he is the superior of any scout and guide I have ever known. Lone Star—Fred M. Hans—according to his friend of twenty years' standing, T. R. Porter, carried no other arms but his two white-handled Colts, with which he performed incredible deeds. Attacked by five horse thieves with rifles, Lone Star, a Colt in each hand, firing from behind his horse, killed two, wounded the other three and took them into Deadwood. Another time, ordered out into Wyoming by General Crook to the infamous Hole-in-the-Wall to clean out an outlaw gang, he set out single-handed. With







his two Colts Lone Star killed Shacknasty Jim and three others, returning to Deadwood with two or three prisoners. Later he became a gold-guard on the Northwestern Railroad, his Colts protecting gold shipments from Deadwood and the Homestake Gold Mine to Omaha.

One of the points to which the scouts sometimes came was a New Mexican village which Emerson Hough called "Heart's Desire" in his novel of that name. There, Uncle Jim Brothers had his anchorage for the Dead Broke, "in a way both hotel and bank." When a man was unable to pay for his meals in Uncle Jim's, "as he went out, he quietly hung up his six-shooter behind the door. This act meant, of course, that for the time being he was legally dead . . ." Back with cash to settle up with Uncle Jim, without comment the paying guest took down his gun and walked off with head and chest high once again. The hotel interior, with its gun-lined nails, looked like an armory. "Excellent weapons they were, too, as good and smooth-running six-shooters as ever came out of Colt's factory . . ."

The scouts used the six-shooter to pound coffee and buffalo meat, to nail on ponies' shoes or club a wagon tire back into place. But a Colt as a banking credit or a meal ticket is about the most unusual use which the West ever found for it.      ♪      ♪





R.L. Frederick  
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# THE COLT    ~    ~ THE LAW    ~    and ~    THE OUTLAW

## Chapter IV

*"He killed* two men and quelled a riot while shaking hands with me in the town square of Abilene." That's the way R. T. Greer, veteran trail driver, wrote to me of Wild Bill Hickok. Abilene, western terminal of the Kansas Pacific Railroad in 1867, was the marketing depot and shipping point for Texas cattle. With one hundred thousand longhorns herded on Abilene's outskirts, brought as far as five hundred, a thousand, fifteen hundred miles by trail drivers for shipment, the cowboys took control of the town. Dance halls, saloons, gambling hells and vice palaces flourished. It was in one of these places that the shots rang out and toward which Wild Bill Hickok ran, leaving Greer in the middle of a handshake. He returned to calmly continue the chat as he re-loaded two ivory-handled Colts, his duty as town marshal complete once more.

Hickok was a killer. His Colts accounted for thirty-eight men—not including the Indians he killed as a scout under Custer or as a stage driver before he came to tame Abilene. Without Hickok's Colts to back it up, the law would have been slower in coming to a lawless center of the West. His deadly





accuracy, the flash with which he drew from his patent-spring side-opening holsters, and the rapidity of his fire struck fear into the most intrepid.

One man against ten, perhaps the only time he didn't carry his second Colt, Wild Bill Hickok killed every member of the McCandles gang when they trapped him in a cabin just prior to his activity as scout in the Civil War. From standing between two telegraph poles and emptying his Colts into each without a miss, to driving a cork at thirty paces through the neck of a bottle and out the bottom without shattering the sides, his uncanny marksmanship is legion. But this dauntless law enforcer did the very thing which every law evader is said to do once—allowed his caution to lapse. In Deadwood, S. D., August 2, 1876, he sat with his back to the door playing cards in the Bell Union saloon. As he pitched from his chair, shot through the head by Jack McCall, an outlaw, his Colts were clutched in the fingers stiffened by death.

Bat Masterson, sheriff of Dodge City, ninety miles from Abilene, constantly compared notes with Hickok. It might almost be said he compared "notches." As he told J. Allan Dunn, "It was sure a case of notch or be notched an' I always figured I'd rather keep score myself than be a marker on someone else's record." Dodge City was another







reason the West was called wild. In quieting it, Masterson was forced to beat thirty-seven men to the draw. As Marshal Bill Tilghman told President Roosevelt in Oklahoma City, the safety of a law officer was a mathematical proposition—Tilghman always beat a gunman by a sixteenth of a second.

In a country newly opened, life could only be a succession of extremes—extreme hardship, extreme tasks, extreme indulgences, extreme passions, and when the law was violated, extreme infractions. These were to be met only by extreme measures. With the cattle rustler, it was the hempen loop or the leaden pellet. With the road agent, bank bandit and train robber, only the extreme penalty, swiftly inflicted with a Colt, could halt their outrages. Among the terrorists in the Texas Panhandle was a slim, gentle looking youth called Billy the Kid. Twenty-one years old with nineteen men slain at the muzzles of his Colts, he brought the toll to the number of his years by killing his two jailers in a sensational escape while under sentence of death. But, just as the Colts of a posse, in which were James H. East, Clyde and Fred Sutton and Jimmie Carlyle, cornered him in a cabin and captured him the first time under the leadership of the indomitable Federal deputy marshal Pat Garrett, the Colt on the side of the law once again proved stronger





than the Colt set against it. Hiding in his sweetheart's house at Fort Sumner, one night Billy the Kid stepped across the way to cut a slice from a beef hanging on Pete Maxwell's porch. Pat Garrett was sitting beside Pete Maxwell's bed asking the rancher the whereabouts of Billy the Kid as the outlaw backed through the door, his gun covering two of Garrett's men who were waiting outside. He asked Maxwell who they were. Garrett recognized his voice and, dropping from the chair beside the bed, fired his Colt just as Billy the Kid, in the darkness, sensed the extra presence in the chair and said "Quién es?" The outlaw's career was at an end.

Following the fearless peace officer, the sway of the sheriff and the rule of the marshal, the true reign of the law gradually evolved. A court, in its crudest form, brought the "Law West of the Pecos." Fifty cattlemen appointed an eccentric old character, who called himself Roy Bean, to be judge in the tiny village of Eagle Nest, Texas, on Pecos River. With a coyote and black bear for his porch companions, a single old statute book for his authority, and his saloon and general store for the setting, he held court daily and enforced his judgment with his compelling Colt. From an order to set up drinks to a sentence of hanging for cattle rustling, the day's verdicts veered in this strange





court. The decisions were eccentric but just, and in the early 80's and 90's Judge Bean, his court and his Colt, compelled respect and kept down disorder.

The law gained majesty through Congress creating a United States Court at Fort Smith, Arkansas, with almost unlimited powers. In face of personal danger from factions whose leaders he hung, from desperadoes whose bands he broke up with merciless prison sentences, Judge Isaac C. Parker dealt speedily and relentlessly with brand blotchers, murderers and the vicious element of a virile land for twenty-one years. At the command of Colts, marshals, deputies, and vigilantes brought thirteen thousand men to trial before this border Solomon.

Just as the military forces with their rifles and Colts obliterated the menace of the Indian, the forces of the law, organized behind the Colt, stamped out lawless disregard for human life.

The notorious Butch Cassidy gang was broken up, the Starrs and their desperado cohorts met the Colt and were vanquished. Jesse James, who used a Colt to defy the law, met retribution with a Colt in its hand. Clem Yore, himself a ranger and deputy sheriff, who writes stories, has seen Bob Ford use the Colt with which he became Jesse James' nemesis. Jesse James was probably one of the few outlaws to whom clemency might have been a just





consideration. Gordon Young, whose Western writings preserve the romance of fact, relates how an old woman, by whom they were unrecognized, rustled up a dinner for the James boys. She poured out to them a pitiful woe of expecting a sheriff's coming to foreclose a mortgage for \$1,400, of which she had scraped together just a part payment on her farm. Jesse James said "I think that dinner was worth just about \$700.00;" and Frank said "It strikes me that way, too." So they paid \$1,400 for the dinner, bade the astounded old woman good-day and rode off. Much to his surprise, the sheriff received payment in full when he arrived at the farm. On his way back to town, two masked men blocked the road, relieved the sheriff of \$1,400 and disappeared.

The days of the Clay Allisons and Mike Russells, John Slaughters, Captain Townsends, that honor roll of historical sheriffs and marshals whose Colt deeds Frederick Bechdolt has preserved in worthy writings of the West, are over. Curley Billy who spun his gun by the trigger guard in surrendering, and shot Major White; John Ringo who, pursued into the desert, turned his Colt on himself in a madness of thirst; the Younger Brothers who lived lawlessly by the Colt and died lawfully by the Colt—all the picturesque border brigands are gone, thanks to the peace-bringing, law-upholding Colt.





# HE COLT IN WARFARE

## Chapter V

*Coolly, methodically*, swiftly, the scout, Amos Chapman, lifted the wounded soldier to his shoulder. His Colt flashed grimly but the mounted war party of Sioux thundered towards him. Again the vicious "spat!" as he staggered on a few paces and then turned to fire. It was crack and run. Crack! Crack! a few more steps with the sphut! phut! of the Sioux missiles hitting the ground about him. He was struck. He staggered, re-gained himself, fired again and dragging one leg, lurched forward as friendly hands reached out and dragged him to cover. Chapman lost a leg by that deed but gained the highest praise and eulogy that Nelson A. Miles and General Dodge ever paid to a plains scout.

From sporadic Indian outrages to organized Indian warfare, the resistance to progress westward increased until it developed a military problem for the nation. So vast was the territory being opened that protection by soldiery could only be accomplished through the establishment of military posts at strategic points along the main-traveled routes. Even then, the area to be patrolled thinned the ranks of the soldiery over vast reaches. The strength





of these troops had its secret in two things. One of them was the swiftness of their movements. The other was their timely equipment with the Colt.

In 1846, Parkman, traveling over the Oregon Trail, found the Colt at Fort Laramie. At the time Fremont was using a Colt to bring an expedition through the wilderness in safety, the first thousand Colt revolvers used formally in military warfare were carrying Zachary Taylor's troops to victory against Santa Anna at Buena Vista. The Colt became known as the Texas pistol because of its use by the Texans in winning freedom from Mexico.

In 1840, before the Colt's official adoption by the army, Colonel Colt sent a boatload down to Florida and they were used by the soldiers in the bitterly contested war with the Seminoles. Without the Colt, the army officers who importuned the Government for several hundred to be used in the hand-to-hand fighting in 1837-38, claim the subjection of the Seminoles would not have been achieved.

But out on the prairies, where the green fires of silent avengers smoke-signalled death-traps ahead of wagon trails, railroad surveyors, prospectors and isolated ranchers, the Colt leaped from the cavalryman's holster to do its most constant early duty.

Scouting for General Crook's soldiers at Fort Meade, South Dakota, Lone Star fell into the hands





of Dull Knife and his Cheyennes. His captors set out for the Cheyennes' stronghold in Wyoming. "When we reach there, you shall die by torture," promised Dull Knife. But Lone Star riding through rain in torrents, allowed the deerskin thongs, with which his hands were tied, to soak. In the night he freed his hands from the stretching, wet deerskin, re-gained one of his Colts, but before he could reach the other, the redskin who had it turned over in his sleep. With one of the picketed ponies, Lone Star made his escape to Fort Robinson, a hundred miles away. From there he brought a detachment of cavalrymen. In a fierce battle, Dull Knife was captured with those of his band who were not killed. In telling of the fight, Lone Star said: "On one of the captured braves was my other white-handled Colt. I got around behind the horse and kissed it." Two weeks later, Dull Knife and his fellows tried to escape and many were killed, including Dull Knife.

Even with the Colt, a cavalryman's life was no sinecure. T. R. Porter tells of the burning at stake by the Cheyennes of Sergeant James Daley of the Fifth Cavalry. Across his breast a squaw raked a burning brand; a buck cut him in several places and ignited pieces of pine which he stuck in the incisions. When he fainted they revived him, then set a light to the wood piled up around him. His body





was blistered and his legs terribly burned when, charging like a whirlwind to the rescue, came “the dear old Fifth Cavalry, Colts in one hand, sabers in the other, bridles on their galloping horses’ necks.”

Not always was the heroic cavalryman so fortunate. After the battle at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota, 1890, in which three hundred of Sitting Bull’s warriors were killed, at the doorway of a log cabin was found Captain George D. Wallace. His .45 Colt contained six empty shells. On the ground in front of him lay five dead Indian braves—each killed by a single bullet. It was evident that, with the sixth shot, Captain Wallace had died rather than fall into the waiting fiendish hands.

Despite the fact that plainsmen still wore their hair long to show the Indian they were not afraid of being scalped, with the coming of the Colt the red-skin counted coup decreasingly. While the soldiers in the West were trailing down war-parties of Apaches, Navahoes, Cheyennes, Piutes, or Brule Indians, fighting the Mormons or quelling border disturbances like the Lincoln County or Mexican County wars in Texas, the North and South split asunder over the slavery question. Sheridan, Phil Kearney, Scott, Dodge, Casement and Lee, all men who had brought themselves glory on the plains, now added luster to their names by their noble lead-







ership in a cause that is the saddest recollection of American history. So, we find General Fitzhugh Lee, who commanded the cavalry of the army of Northern Virginia, writing that among the best arms for cavalry is "Colt's navy size revolver." The dashing Black Horse Cavalrymen of J. E. B. Stuart used the Colt. Shelby's men fought for their cause with the Colt. Generals Halderman, Harney, and Scott wore the Colt.

Came a day when the nation was electrified by "Damn the torpedoes"—Farragut's call to battle. As he churned his flagship over the mines, and gave the order to ram the "Tennessee," he sprang into the port mizzen rigging above the poop deck, where he could see over the smoke and observe the other vessels in engagement. On the deck beneath Farragut stood Admiral Watson, Colt revolver in hand, ready to drop anyone on board the ram who might try to pick him off.

In the battle of Fort Fisher, Lieutenant Evans—later Admiral Fighting Bob—was shot in the leg when mounting the parapet. Tying a handkerchief around the wound, he led his men through the stockade and went down with a bullet through his right knee. The sharpshooter, firing at about thirty-five yards, hit again. With one of his toes missing and his ankle wrenched, Evans rolled over in the sand and





faced his antagonist who, seeing him down, exposed himself. Evans aimed his Colt at the Confederate's breast and pulled the trigger. The sniper pitched over the parapet, dead.

In Captain Stuart's cavalry was a cold fighting machine named Charles William Quantrell. At Carthage, Wilson's Creek and Lexington he served with conspicuous daring. This young man carried four of Colt's navy revolvers and, after the war, led a Guerilla band in lawless depredations on the Missouri and Kansas borders. Each of these spectacular horsemen carried twenty-four to thirty-six lives in their belts, holsters and boots—none having less than four, many of them six, dragoon Colts. In the last week of April, 1865, Quantrell killed a Federal cavalryman at nearly a hundred yards with one of his Colts. In battle with Captain Edward Terrell's mounted men, Quantrell received his death wound June 11th, 1865. Nearly every member of his band was made a desperado by wrongs suffered, as Hugh Pendexter points out, during the partisan warfare waged by those who were not enrolled in either the Northern or Southern army. Jesse James saw his stepfather hung up and left for dead, and his mother and sister thrown into jail in St. Joseph. Coleman Younger, who became a sensational railroad and bank bandit, saw his father hung by border







riff-raff, and Quantrell, with his Colt, slew thirty out of thirty-two men who murdered his brother.

The cavalry, turning its attention to the Indian disturbances again, after quelling these irregular border bands, reached the apex of their gallant record with the Custer tragedy at the Little Big Horn. A few days before, Crook with eleven hundred and fifty men had engaged six thousand Indians. In this battle, Colonel Guy V. Henry, terribly wounded, stayed in action with his Colt at the head of his men until he fell out of the saddle. While Crook was reconditioning his men in camp, Terry's men moved forward. Custer's Seventh Cavalry was separated from the main command when trapped and, with carbine and Colt, sold their lives dearly to the savages. Colonel Miles' men, hand-to-hand fighting with Colts in blinding snow, dealt Crazy Horse the blow which broke the final Indian resistance. There was fierce fighting with Chief Joseph's Nez Percés, Chief Ouray's Utes and Geronimo's Apaches before the Colt of the army could finally be holstered again.

It then became active with the Navy. In charge of a punitive expedition against Apia, Samoa, April 1st, 1899, Lieutenant Philip V. Lanadale bravely faced with his Colt a greatly superior number of hostile natives. Colt in hand, Ensign John R. Monaghan stood by when Lanadale fell mortally wounded





and received his own death wound. Whether fighting in the extinct volcano of Mount Daho at Lapuals in Basilan Islands, or with Roosevelt's men at Santiago, in Haiti against the blacks, at Tientsin, China, during the Boxer War, with Dewey at Manila or with Funston against Aguinaldo the grip of the Colt inspired the soldier to courageous deeds.

One of history's startling figures was William Walker, King of the Filibusters. This little lawyer-doctor-editor, whose Napoleonic tale Eugene Cunningham has so well told, made himself President of Nicaragua back of his Colt .47 and backed by his dare-devil redshirts with their Colts—the Fifty-Six Immortals.

“Personally, in Nicaragua, where the natives look upon any white man with almost fanatic hatred,” writes Cunningham, “I should rather have my Colt than a safe conduct signed by all the presidents from William Walker to Chamorro.” His ivory-handled Colt did save him from the naked blade of a machete, by the mere act of fingering it. But by leaping it into action, three quick shots saved him from the spring of a jaguar crouched on a limb under which he was about to walk. “Snarling and clawing up the leaves, it fell ten feet away . . .”

Another picturesque figure inspired by Walker, when fighting his way to destiny with his Colt, was







Henry Crabb. Crabb led a colonizing expedition to Sonora. He had visions of Midas riches. Instead, he found betrayal by Pesquiera, the Mexican officer who had encouraged his project of a principality. For six days besieged by the Mexicans at Caborca, Crabb's expeditionaires took steady toll with their Colts. The defense of the little band was gallant but hopeless. Surrender on promise of fair treatment resulted in treacherous massacre of the Americans.

The failure of a filibustering adventure which left him an officer of one of two ships that comprised the navy of a South American country, set the Colt of Robert Conrad Powell into action. Weary of waiting for their back-pay from the regime which had failed to install itself as the power in this Latin Revolution, that erst-while Sergeant of the Confederate navy a-field for adventure, with the help of his fellow Americans among the crew, turned their Colts upon the native contingent of the Columbia and sailed out of the harbor of Carthagen. Powell and some of his comrades transferred at sea to a French ship and reached New York. The muzzle-loading Colt with which he captured a battleship is today in possession of Major Louis S. Scott who married Robert Conrad Powell's daughter.

Mars girded on his Colt and rumbled forth his sullen battle clouds over Europe in 1914. The clouds





separated a moment and a white light shone down upon an act of stirring heroism. A company of dough-boys advancing through the village of Brancourt was suffering severe loss from the enfilading fire of a German machine-gun nest among shell holes at the edge of the town. Richmond H. Hilton, a young Sergeant, sprang out ahead of a detail and straight in the face of the scathing fire from the gun. With his Colt, he killed six of the enemy and captured ten. In the course of this fearless exploit, a wound from a bursting shell caused the loss of his arm. I obtained these facts from the War Department records. The answer to my letter to the hero himself being: "I used a Colt army automatic, caliber .45, however, I am not in a position to write a story of my exploit. Yours very truly, R. H. Hilton." Of such material is made the leaders of men. The roster of men in the World War decorated "for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy" would keep an adding machine busy for days running off the serial numbers of the Colts with which they so gloriously distinguished themselves. To the Colt the man on the firing line gave his confidence, trust and praise. An American Arm, in warfare it has always been raised by an American arm to further a just cause in an honorable field.      ♪      ♪







# THE COLT IN LITERATURE

## Chapter VI

*"He whirled, Colt in hand, and searched the secreted rim of the ravine."* Clarence Mulford says: "In all of my books there are mentions of the Colt like this one from 'Hopalong Cassidy's Protege'". Mr. Mulford is not so prolific as J. Allan Dunn, H. Bedford-Jones or Hugh Pendexter, but an actual count of Colt mentions in his sixteen books totals three hundred eleven. The Colt literally shoots his plots along with opportunities for such clever allusions as this: "I've got a wider range than marshal," rejoined Tex grimly "... an', besides, I got th' very same authority here as I have in town: twelve sections of the Colt statutes as made an' pervided ...".

To the Western novelist a great deal of credit must go for crystalizing American ideas of fair play, clean living and respect-commanding character. In his subject, the West, there is more of pure romance than in warfare or any other background for the novel. The grandeur of the theme has gripped the American author. To the scrupulous study of Western history by such men as Hugh Pendexter,





Edwin L. Sabin, Charles Alden Selzer, Frederick Niven, Frank Spearman, Walt Coburn, Courtney Ryley Cooper, George Ogden, Hamlin Garland, Dane Coolidge, Ralph Cummins, Kenneth Perkins, Harold Titus and Harry Drago I am indebted for many of the facts in the historical narrative of the Colt this brochure contains. Eugene Cunningham is right: "As well try to describe New York without skyscrapers as the West without Colt."

In the fiction of the Northwest, George Marsh and John M. French find the Colt essential to the action. Writes Mr. French: "I put the Colt into the hands of my characters because I have drawn them from life. I dress them as they dress and arm them as they arm. Among the northern Indians and hunters, the term 'gun' is seldom used. To them it means 'shotgun'. Revolver to them is Colt."

Even authors whose literature can't include Colts have adventures with them. Edgar Rice Burroughs at one time was railway policeman in Salt Lake City. A Colt, as he says, assisted him "materially in running hoboes off U. P. trains."

Ethel Smith Dorrance developed a Colt complex with the idea that someone had designs on her life or the other way about. When she moved her residence, she sewed her Colt in a sofa pillow. When she got her belongings out of storage nothing else







was missing but, from the middle of the pillow, her Colt was gone. Someone else had developed a Colt complex, too.

“Robin made a dive for the Colt sticking out of Thatcher’s scabbard . . .” Colt incidents quicken the action in “Wild West,” Bertrand W. Sinclair’s novel from the serial in *Short Stories Magazine*. “I packed a Frontier Model .45 for eight years,” Sinclair says. “You could use it for the purpose its maker designed it or to drive tent-pegs in a pinch. It was all one to the Colt . . . a good deal of the order that existed in spite of complete absence of organized law, was due to the unprejudiced, impartial justice dealt out by Colonel Colt.”

Charles Alden Selzer, Walter J. Coburn, Clem Yore, Will James, W. C. Tuttle, and Henry Herbert Knibbs all toted Colts as deputies, prospectors or buckaroos before they became riders on the literary range.

“Well, you danged jumpin-jack, get us some ropes,” yelled Sleepy, poking his Colt into a man’s ribs. “Do yuh think we want to sit on ’em until they petrify?” Thus exhorts a W. C. Tuttle character in “The Medicine Man,” *Adventure Magazine*, while over in *Short Stories Magazine* Clem Yore sees to it that Lon, “A Son of the Circle”, in “swinging the girl half behind him . . . drilled Seky as he made a





R.L. Frederick  
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play for his Colt." J. E. Grinstead, in *Frontier Magazine*, creates Colt complications in "The Master Squatter," to be sensed from this: "Jim Sampson at twenty-five was the direct result of the labors of one Sam Colt, a deep-sea sailorman who had a penchant for revolvers, and Joe Glidden, the originator of barbed wire in fencing quantities; there was the combination, fences for the nesters to cut, and six-shooters to kill the nesters with. So Jim Sampson was made, willy nilly, by Colt & Glidden, master tailors."

Frank Spearman, in his novel "The Mountain Divide," like Frank L. Packard, gives the reader a glimpse of how the life of a lonely mountain division railroad telegraph operator often rested in "A Colt's, fired first and aimed afterward." Mr. Spearman says: "A story depicting life on a Rocky Mountain Frontier could not be written without reference to a Colt's"—just as Captain Mayne Reid considered the Colt undetachable from his undying stories of our Southwest.

Much of the public's incorrect impression of the use of a Colt revolver, gained from the moving pictures, is corrected by the meticulous description of the Western author. So, in "The Wolfer," Frederick Niven compares the method of "slamming down" with the method of "throwing up", and exemplifies still another way an accustomed user ma-





nipulates his Colt. No gunman going into action with his Colt, ever stretched his arm forward and aimed as he shot. Men like Harry Sinclair Drago, Ralph Cummins, Gordon Young, Barry Scobee, Eugene Manlove Rhodes or Ken Perkins make the reader see a Colt leap into action as it actually did in the days of the quick draw of which they write. They know that a Colt was sometimes called a hog-leg. Manlove Rhodes, wrangler, puncher and rancher, says sometimes it was called "a cutter", or "plow handle", or "Hishonor." But it was always a Colt's. Attention to accuracy in details is especially valuable in the Western story. It moves swiftly and etches deeply all of its impressions. The reader carries away with great permanence his concept of dress, mannerisms, and locale where description only hits the high-spots. Points like the picture of a holster, and its part in protecting life, as illustrated by Ralph Cummins' "Paradise Hole" in *Ace-High Magazine*, are the details for which Western authors deserve credit.

Caroline Lockhart tells a story of a cowboy called "Laughing Charlie." To make good his boast on the marksmanship of his friend Bill Somebody, he declared his willingness to hold a bottle and let "Bill" break it. "Bill" pulled his Colt Automatic and broke the bottle, but he also shot off a couple





of his admirer's fingers. When the latter called the fact to his attention, "Bill" said: "Take it in the other hand, Charlie, I got the range now."

The heroes of Robert Welles Ritchie and that real, died-in-the-wool Westerner, Arthur Preston Hankins, win their way to fame and fortune with the Colt—and Joseph Bushnell Ames can tell you that a gunman fanned his gun, never used the trigger, but filed the hammer notch, flicking the hammer back so that it fell when it was released. Dane Coolidge makes it clear that no bad man ever gets beaten with the butt of the Colt—it's done with the barrel. Often a capture alive is an officer's object in hand-to-hand fighting and the gun is held by the handle in clubbing, first, because it might jar off and shoot its wielder in the abdomen and second, because, as Rye Miles, ex-ranger explained to Coolidge, you might have to shoot the fellow after all.

From "the familiar Colt .45 of the old-time West," in Harold Bell Wright's "The Winning of Barbara Worth" which does "a flash draw from . . . tied down holsters," the old Frontier Colt progresses through Western literature. From epic novel, romance, and purely adventure yarn types to the magazine story like "Living Lightning" by James French Dorrance the Colt furnishes drama for author and reader, and finally introduces itself





in "Click of Triangle T" by Oscar J. Friend as a new mysterious mechanism, the Automatic.

In Stewart Edward White's "The Two Cartridges" in the Golden Book, speaking of preparations by a sheriff and his prisoner to stand off a band of Sioux, he writes "each was armed . . . with a brace of Colt's revolvers . . ." and it is two cartridges in the sheriff's Colt which are the key to the twist in the end of his story.

Far-sighted editors like Matthew White, Jr., of the Argosy, J. E. Maule, of Short Stories, J. B. Kelly, of Action Stories, Northwest Stories and the Lariat Story Magazine, Arthur Sullivan Hoffmann of Adventure and W. C. Clayton, editorial director of Ace-High and Ranch Romances, know that to their readers and authors the Colt is as fixed a part of the West as its mountains, plains and deserts, spurs, lariat and chaps. Robert H. Davis, of Munsey's says: "I have about come to the conclusion that no good fiction can be written without a full set of props, and by the word 'props' I mean weapons. The crash of a .45 and the bark of a Colt will forever reverberate from page to page and age to age."

The mystery story writer finds the Colt potency a plot ingredient that cannot be mixed in without "stirring." Alfred Henry Lewis, in his "Confessions of a Detective" writes: "a small pistol, Colt's make,







calibre .32 was lying on the carpet as though it had fallen from the left hand." In "Bull-Dog Drummond," that aggressive gentleman created by Cyril McNeille prepares for important adventures with directions to his man Denny, who reveals their importance with the reply: "Very good, Sir, I will clean your small Colt revolver at once."

In "The Under Groove," Arthur Stringer creates a tense situation with: "A key gritted in the lock of the street door . . . I could hear the advancing steps as I crouched . . . with my Colt held ready, straight before me . . ."

That writer of war stories, Laurence Stallings, writes in "Plumes" of a soldier taking a shower beside a troop train in a French depot: "It was evident to Whiting that the naked youth under the standpipe was the platoon's officer whose folds of clothing topped by a Sam Browne belt and Colt's .45 were on the steps of the compartment nearest him."

The Colt travels with Marshall R. Hall's adventurers into the tropics, George Marsh's heroes into the north woods but in the stories of John Mersereau, Harold Titus, Herbert Quick, William MacLeod Raine, B. M. Bower, Charles Francis Coe, Rex Beach and F. R. Buckley, the Colt is in its own homeland, the land for whose needs it was created, the land to which it is a part of romance . . . our own far West.



# THE COLT & THE HUNTER AND TRAVELER & &

## Chapter VII

*Many authors* are travelers and hunters, too. I receive their letters from far lands and remote places. But whether it is Homer Croy in Switzerland, William MacLeod Raine in Nice, F. Scott Fitzgerald in Venice, Edison Marshall in the deep north woods or Stewart Edward White in Africa, the Colt is invariably the traveler's companion.

In his "Art of Revolver Shooting," Walter Winans writes: "Many years ago, my father was traveling to St. Petersburg from the frontier, before the railway was completed . . . Lost in a snow-storm at night the driver began unharnessing to ride off and abandon my father and his sister to their fate. My father happened to have in his pocket one of the first Colt revolvers ever made, presented to him by Colonel Colt . . . he took it out and asked the driver to reharness the horses and remain in the sledge. They waited thus all night, and in the morning found their way back to the road. That is a case in which a revolver saved two lives without its being discharged."

From Russia to America the snowbound way-







farer gives gratitude to the Colt. With the man he had set out to rescue from a blizzard, exhausted, and his own strength gone, both of them partly frozen, the plainsman Lone Star sank down in a drift at dusk to die. A distant lamp, lighted in the ranch-house for which they had been making, caught his drooping eye. His weakened voice died in his throat; all vitality gone, he fell back helpless to attract attention. A sudden hope surged through him. With cold, stiffened fingers, Lone Star drew a Colt .45 and, summoning his final strength, shot at a wash-basin hanging where it glinted in the light from the window on the side of the house. Help came.

Owen Davis, the playwright and producer, was taking home the box-office receipts in Toronto one midnight. In his right overcoat pocket his hand rested on a small Colt revolver. As he turned a dark corner a menacing figure confronted him. "Hands up!" the tones whipped out like scorpion venom. Instinct responding to the sudden fierce command, Davis dropped the satchel in his left hand and, in jerking his right from the pocket to elevate it, his finger caught in the trigger guard—as his namesake Bob Davis tells it. Giving a furious tug to his hand to get it aloft, he freed it with such violence his fist caught the bandit under the chin and knocked him prone. Davis gathered up his money satchel and the





only thing the highwayman stole was forty winks due to a Colt that never struck him and a pavement that did.

That literary tramp, Harry L. Foster, to whom the jungle is the Great White Way, buys a Colt when he leaves civilization and passes it on to someone when he emerges from the wilds. He has never had to use a gun but says of the Colt: "I felt a darned sight better going through the jungle with it."

Frederick Niven gives me this exciting experience from "With Lawrence in Arabia," by Lowell Thomas. In Asia Minor, Lawrence was weakened by fever. While making his way toward Birgik, the next village, he was set upon by a Turkoman. "He sat on my stomach, and pulled out my Colt," said Lawrence, "pressed it to my temple, and pulled the trigger many times. But the safety catch was on. The primitive Turkoman "with crooked eyes and a face that looked as though it had been modeled in butter, and then left out in the sun," threw away the weapon in disgust. "He proceeded to pound my head with a rock until I was no longer interested," Lawrence continued. "I went to the village and got the inhabitants to help me chase the scoundrel. We caught him and made him disgorge the things he had relieved me of. Since then I have always had a profound respect for a Colt, and have never been without one."







C. H. Blake, who has "checkerboarded fourteen of the twenty-six Mexican states and hit about all the high-spots in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma," says "I packed a Colt for three years of the last Mexican revolution and took it along 'Over There' . . . I met many British officers during the war who had a Colt instead of their own British equipment." He says, in *Hunter-Trader-Trapper Magazine*, "The Frontier Colt has been the defense of more good men, the protector of more homes, saved from death or capture by Indians more women and kids, upheld law and order in more instances, been the finish of more bad characters, and done more to civilize the West, than all the pistols ever manufactured."

The brother of that hunter and marksman extraordinary, Chauncey Thomas, when nine years old was put on a horse by his Mother to ride break-neck for help from their isolated house on the plains eastward from the Platte, toward the Divide. Two villainous looking men had knocked on the locked door. They asked for something to eat. They insisted, then went off and held a consultation. The lone woman watched them through a hole in the window-blind. As the boy and horse left the house the men made off over the prairie. Caught by a posse the next day, they proved to be murderers



who escaped from the penitentiary at Canon City by killing guards, where a Vigilance Committee later hung them. As Chauncey Thomas writes: "Why they did nothing in that little lone house on the bare plains, with a lone woman and her brood of four babes, food in the house and horses in the barn, was that in my Mother's hand was a Colt six-shooter—cocked."

A moose charged the car of W. Charles Haney in New Brunswick, Canada, maddened by the headlights. "I had a Colt's .38 navy in the car," he says in *Hunter-Trader-Trapper*. "But it was not loaded, and you can bet we loaded it in a hurry."

Edison Marshall, in his "The Snowshoe Trail," recounts for fiction purposes a fact-feat of marksmanship which he saw Dean Cochran, the Selkirk guide, perform with the Colt Automatic. "He shot four times . . . Soon he pushed through the thickets . . . In his hand he held . . . not one, but four grouse. 'Pretty lucky that time', he explained. 'I got 'em through the neck. That leaves the meat clean.'"

A close friend of D. Wiggins of Adventure's fire-arm department, a trapper who had served under General Custer, killed at the second shot a black-tailed deer near Durango, Colorado, at an estimated range of four hundred yards, with a Colt .45 single-







action revolver. Three mountaineers testified that the distance was somewhat greater than he states.

J. Bruce, California's lion hunter, has killed his two hundred and eighteenth Puma with a Colt Frontier 38-40, the only arm he has ever used, and it has never failed him in his stalking vigils.

Frank B. Coe, a hunter of many narrow escapes when the West was young, faced a furious cougar or panther after failing to stop her with a rifle, whereupon he says: "I jerked my .45 Colt's from the scabbard and shot her through the heart just as she made her last long spring to catch me and she fell dead right at my feet. The next morning I returned to the spot and Skip located the little lions—four—and after many bites and scratches, we managed to tie the little devils up and I took them in alive. I found where they had been feasting upon a big buck deer which the she-lion had killed just previous to my arrival upon the scene."

Whether in Nicaragua, where it has saved Eugene Cunningham from the fanatic natives or in Marseilles, France, where it saved F. R. Buckley from footpads, the Colt is the comforter of hunter and traveler and his tribute to its protection in dangerous places or its accuracy in difficult shots is ever ready to leap from lip like the Colt's leap from hip.





# THE COLT *and* *the Constabulary*

## Chapter VIII

"*Well, I'll say, Mister Texas Ranger, it was some shot. You stitched that hombre—stitched him nine times from the Adam's apple to the belt buckle . . . what the hell gun did you shoot him with, Mister?*" "An Army Colt's forty-five calibre," answers the Ranger in Barry Scobee's "Leaden Laughter" from Adventure Magazine. This is a fact-story told to Mr. Scobee by a Texas Ranger who had "stitched" the Mexican in that manner across the Rio Grande, shooting from shore to shore. The Texas Rangers were the first semi-military policing body to adopt the Colt for their arm, at that time under Captain Jack Bayes. Captain McCulloch's Rangers gave battle with the Colt under General Taylor at Monterey in 1846.

At Palo Alto and at the battle of Resaca de la Palma, which followed two days later, one officer said "Those Texas Rangers, with Colt's revolvers, walked right into towns and hamlets of the Mexicans and drove the population out against all resistance. Eighty men with those arms drove five hundred Mexicans before them . . ." In the days when a Ranger slept with his head on a piece of







hard beef to keep the wolves from getting it, while trailing an outlaw or rustler, according to Dad McGhee, who was a Ranger in the '70's and 80's, he never drew his gun and covered a man. Summoned to surrender, if he thought he could beat a Ranger to the draw, that was his privilege.

The famous Captain Jack Hayes, cut off by Comanches at Enchanted Rock, Texas, in 1841, fought with his Colt "for three long hours" until his men finally reached him, as Edwin L. Sabin points out in Samuel Reid's "The Texas Ranger." Both Hugh Pendexter and Frederick R. Bechdolt have given the Texas Ranger undying place in the literature of the old West.

Against the smuggling of Chinese into this country, of opium, and of contraband to which the long stretch of our southern border has been an invitation, the Texas Rangers have replied with the Colt during war and peace. It was Jeff D. Milton, a Texas Ranger, who slew Black Jack during a train robbery at Fairbank, and his Colt ended the careers of many other bad men. With it he achieved the distinction of being the only man who out-faced John Wesley Harding, the worst Texas outlaw with twenty notches in his gun and a band at his back. Frank McCullough, of the Northern Pacific—the same who guided Mary Roberts Rinehart on her





tour through the Rockies—tells of a frantic call for the Rangers by a Texas town which was terrorized by race riots. The citizens who met the train felt their hearts sink as only the usual knot of passengers alighted. A little bandy-legged wizened, squint-eyed, wrinkle-faced, leather-skinned runt stepped up to one and asked who sent for the Rangers. An excited citizen acknowledged that responsibility. Hitching his gun belt around, the little man said "Here I am, where's the trouble?" "But," stammered the other, "there is only one of you!" "Well," said the little man, shifting a cud and resting his hand on the butt of a Colt, "There's only one riot ain't there?"

A. L. Haydon in his record of that glamorous, courageous group of men, the Royal Canadian Mounted, writes "The .45 Colt revolver has proved highly serviceable" in their hazardous duties. Whiskey Traders entered Canada and the fierce Blackfoot Indians began to commit depredations through the demoralizing influence of these riff-raff. Buffalo hunters killed the buffalo upon which the Blackfeet lived, and the Traders took the Indians' ponies for whiskey and shipped them out of the country, leaving the Indian helpless to get his food. It was to control this situation that the Royal Canadian Northwest Mounted Police was formed with Lieu-







tenant-Colonel George A. French at their head. Pushing their posts further and further into the north woods, the Canadian Mounted gained the confidence of the Indians and performed many daring exploits in ending the whiskey trade. What the United States cavalry had to do with the resistance of the American Indian, the Mounties found upon their shoulders with the rebellion of the half-breeds on the North Saskatchewan under Louis Riel and Great Bear, in 1869. Running down renegades with the Colt, where the temperature never gets as high as zero; trailing thieves who robbed the trap lines of the fur-trading companies in the Northwest, through blizzard and a land of no shelter; meeting a man desperate enough to face nature at her cruellest in order to escape capture, armed to the teeth and eager to kill, is the work of the Northwest Mounted Policeman. Out of sight of his fellows sometimes for months, afoot over white, desolate wastes, his only friend is his Colt. The Canadian soldiers used the Colt in Flanders and many of their comrades-at-arms were the doughty, debonair, man-trackers of the Northwest Mounted.

To Benson, Arizona, came a bad man from Nevada, seeking to murder an old enemy. Captain Harry C. Wheeler of the Arizona Rangers, met him at the depot platform and ordered him to give up



his revolver. Instead, he fired, grazing the Ranger. In the duel that followed, both men were shot several times but Wheeler's Colt had bunched its slugs so well that the killer did not survive. This same Ranger Captain entered a saloon which was being held up by two highwaymen and, in the battle, his Colt shot down one of the robbers and killed the other.

Private Kline with the Pennsylvania State Police, and Corporal Trautwein, entered the house of a man who was endeavoring to murder his wife and daughter. As they mounted the stairs the man, John Taylor, turned a shot-gun on them. Corporal Trautwein received the discharge in his body and fell, emptying his Colt in the direction of his assailant. Taylor's gun jammed and Private Kline covered him with his Colt, forcing him to drop the shot-gun and making the arrest. This is just a leaf from the page of every-day details of such fine organizations as the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and other State Constabularies whose one unfailing friend in the moments that mean life or death to them is the Colt—truly, "the arm of law and order."



# The Old Colt Gun

By E. A. BRININSTOOL

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—In *Trail Dust of a Maverick*

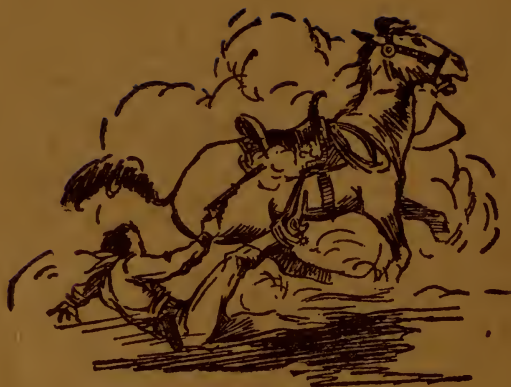
You've been a good old pal to me  
In all the years gone by;  
You've saved my skin in many a spree  
When Death was lurkin' nigh.  
You're rusted some, and battered, too,  
But I ain't kickin' none,  
'Cuz there's a heap I owe to you,  
You dandy old Colt gun!

I packed you on the cattle trail  
Way back in '86,  
And never knowed you yet to fail  
When I got in a fix.  
You shot the lights out more'n once  
When we struck town fer fun,  
And done a heap of other stunts,  
You bully old Colt gun!

When my old paws close on yer grip,  
I seem to see once more,  
Them prairie stretches in "The Strip,"  
And the old bunkhouse door,  
Where night-times we would sit and gaze  
Off to'rds the settin' sun—  
Oh, wasn't them the happy days,  
You dandy old Colt gun!

I mind them nights we stood on guard  
When we was trailin' steers,  
When growlin' thunder ripped and jarred,  
And grumbled in our ears!  
And how that stampede made us sweat!  
'Twas sure a lively run!  
There was excitement then, you bet,  
You corkin' old Colt gun!

And now you're hangin' on the wall,  
Where firelight shadows play;  
I reckon, takin' all in all,  
That you have had your day.  
But when I think what you've been through,  
And what you've seen and done,  
A million bucks would not buy you,  
You bully old Colt gun!







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